

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWING

Submitted herewith is a proposed change, shown in red, to FIG. 2 of the drawing. A substitute formal drawing will be submitted upon approval. Addition of reference numerals 202, 103A and 103B are made to be consistent with the amendment to Paragraph 12, page 3, of the specification. No new matter has been added.

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections and rejections set forth in the Office Action of April 14, 2005, are earnestly solicited.

The election of Species I, Claims 1, 2 and 6—9 is affirmed. Claims 3—5 are withdrawn.

Claims 1 and 7 have been amended to clarify Applicants' invention, and these amendments are not believed to narrow the scope of the amended claims. Claims 1, 2 and 6—9 remain pending in the application.

Specification

The objection to the specification is believed mooted by the proposed change to FIG. 2 of the drawing and the amendment of Paragraphs 12 and 13. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 2 and 6—8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Van Winsen et al., U.S. Patent 3,903,982. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Van Winsen et al. does not teach buckling of a first section transversely to the longitudinal axis (Claims 1, 2, 7 and 8). See Fig. 2 and the last paragraph of Column 2. The fold in portion 22 extends axially. Further, there is no disclosure of a fuel tank at all, let alone one that is at least partially surrounded by a fuel tank (Claim 6). Claims 1, 2 and 6—8 are believed to be patentably distinguishable over Van Winsen et al.

Claims 1 and 6—9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Miller, U.S. 6,435,299. The rejection is respectfully traversed. There is no disclosure in Miller of an intentionally weakened area in the propeller shaft's front section (Claims 1 and 7—8). Further, Miller does not disclose any fuel tank positioning, let alone one at least partially surrounding the second section of the propeller shaft (Claims 6 and 9). Claims 1 and 6—9 are believed to be patentably distinguishable over Miller.

Claims 1, 2, 6 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Uchikawa et al., U.S. Patent 6,328,656. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Uchikawa et al. does not teach buckling transversely to the shaft axis. As shown most clearly in Figs. 4a—e, the bellows of Uchikawa et al. collapses axially (Claims 1, 2, 7). Further, Uchikawa et al. is silent as to the relative position of a fuel tank with respect to the second section of the propeller shaft (Claim 6). Claims 1, 2, 6 and 7 are believed to be potentially distinguishable over Uchikawa et al.

Claims 1, 2, 6 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Jacob, U.S. Patent 6,241,617. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

As stated in the Jacob Abstract, a plunging element 16, 30 is provided in the form of a rolling contact member guide which permits displacements along the longitudinal axis 32. There is no teaching of transverse buckling (Claims 1, 2 and 7). Further, no fuel tank positioning relative to the propeller shaft system is disclosed (Claim 6). Claims 1, 2, 6 and 7 are believed to be patentably distinguishable over Jacob.

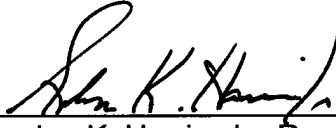
Claims 1, 2 and 6—8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Blumke et al., U.S. Patent 6,766,877. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Submitted herewith is a Declaration Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.131 setting forth evidence

of actual reduction to practice of Applicants' invention prior to June 24, 2002, the effective filing date of the Blumke et al. reference. Withdrawal of Blumke et al. as a reference is therefore requested.

Claims 1 and 7, as amended herein, and Claims 2 and 7—9, as originally submitted, are believed to be in condition for allowance, early acknowledgment of which is requested. Additionally, said withdrawn Claims 3—5 directly depend from Claim 1, reconsideration of Claims 3—5 is also requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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